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Self Concept Gain Scores and Reading Efficiency Terminal Ratios as a Function of Specialized Reading Instruction or Personal Interaction.

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Descriptors-Elementary School Students. *Individual Instruction. Individualized Programs. *Interaction. *Reading Achievement. Reading Instruction. *Self Concept. *Underachievers

The impact of specialized reading instruction or personal interaction upon reading efficiency ratios and self-concept scores was studied. Eighty-five fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade boys of average intelligence who were underachieving readers were placed in one of three different groups--Reading Instruction, Personal Interaction, or Control. The Reading Instruction Group received instruction planned for an individual's specific needs; the sequential development of reading skills based upon successful experiences was emphasized. The Personal Interaction Group received no instruction, but participated in such pupil-teacher planned activities as games, drawing, and tape recording. Each group met for 25 half-hour sessions. The Control Group subjects attended their regular classes only. Multiple linear regression analyses were drawn. Gains in reading efficiency were made with all methods of instruction. The Reading Instruction method was superior according to an informal reading inventory and to the Spaulding Self-Concept Inventory. The Personal Interaction method proved superior for a few subjects with low pretest Spaulding Self-Concept Inventory scores. Some subjects with high self-concepts were affected negatively upon removal from the classroom. References are included. (CM)

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SELF CONCEPT GAIN SCORES AND READING EFFICIENCY TERMINAL RATIOS
AS A
FUNCTION OF SPECIALIZED READING INSTRUCTION OR PERSONAL INTERACTION

There seems to be a general acceptance throughout the literature that there is a relationship between self concept and achievement in the educational setting (4,5,6,7). Reading achievement is no exception (9,10,12). Through research it has been found that varieties of methods of therapeutic and/or instructional situations help the students to make gains in self concept and/or reading ability (1,2,3,8,11). Significant others, teachers and parents particularly, have been found to play an important role in the development of the psychological security which in turn aided in more positive academic achievement.

The rather common remedial reading situation was used as the educational organization around which to develop this study. The

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fact that generalizations may be found which could relate to classroom situations should not be overlooked.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were eighty-five fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade boys of average intelligence who were underachieving readers.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact which specialized reading instruction or personal interaction had upon the subjects' reading efficiency ratios and their self concept scores.

Procedure

Selection of subjects was based upon scores received on the Gates Reading Survey and the Large-Thorndike Non-Verbal Intelligence Test. Further testing was done with the California Test of Personality, The Spaulding Self Concept Inventory and an informal reading inventory.

The subjects were placed in one of three different groups: Reading Instruction, Personal Interaction or Control. The Reading Instruction and Personal Interaction Groups each met for a total of twenty-five, one-half hour experimental sessions which occurred over a period of time from January 31 until May 4.

The Reading Instruction Group received instruction which was planned for individuals' specific needs as identified by the formal and informal testing and daily observations. Emphasis was placed upon the sequential development of abilities with particular stress

placed upon the pupil's attaining success. The climate of the sessions was planned to be challenging yet reassuring. Experience stories, basal readers, text books for content classes and instructor-prepared materials were used.

The Personal Interaction Group received no instruction, but participated in pupil-teacher planned activities. Examples of such activities included: discussions, playing bingo and other games, drawing, telling stories, jokes and riddles, role playing and tape recording. The instructor was an aid, a resource person, and a participant in an activity when needed. She tried to help develop an accepting atmosphere by being a supportive, helpful, pleasant, positive person.

Subjects who were members of the Control Group attended their regular classes. They had no personal contact with the investigator. The instruction which they received in the classroom was dependent upon the program developed by the individual teachers. Basal series with accompanying workbooks were available to them. All of the students in the three schools had the opportunity to go to the libraries in their buildings once during each week.

Statistical Procedures

Multiple linear regression analyses were used to examine the relationship that existed between methods of instruction, pre-test reading efficiency ratios and pre-test self concept scores and criterion variables (terminal reading efficiency ratios and post-test self concept scores).

Results

There was a constant level of difference in methods of instruction over the observed range of the informal reading inventory pre-test reading efficiency ratios. They made gains with all methods of instruction. The Reading Instruction method was a superior method of instruction for this sample when the analysis was based upon the informal reading inventory.

There was a significant interaction among the methods of instruction and the Spaulding Self Concept Inventory pre-test scores. The Reading Instruction method was a superior method of instruction for almost everyone when the analysis was based upon the Spaulding Self Concept Inventory. The Personal Interaction method was a superior method for a few who had low pre-test Spaulding Self Concept Inventory scores.

There were no significant relationships over the observed range of interest for the Gates Reading Survey pre-test reading efficiency ratios and the California Test of Personality pre-test scores.

Implications

Schools which are developing new programs or improving existing programs would probably like to consider using some of these same techniques for their regular classroom settings as well as for their remedial situations. The learning situation which is geared toward the individual's needs has more potential for developing into a successful experience. These successful experiences seem to result in improved reading ability and appear to positively affect the self concepts of the majority of students.

It was found in this study that the boys responded positively at all times to the reading instruction which had been prepared for them. Two of the guidelines for the construction of the material may have been the major reasons for this attitude. The material was developed specifically for their needs and presented at a level which would insure success. The skills which were taught were reviewed to help reinforce the learning and establish retention of the material. It did not seem difficult for the subjects to become interested in the reading material. Stories were chosen according to their expressed interests and actual identification of a story they would like to read.

It seems possible that our schools could quite easily apply some of these same considerations in larger group situations. Of course it necessitates knowing the students' needs and abilities. Successful experiences should not be impossibilities for those who are underachievers in our schools.

Successful experiences need not all be academic in nature. The subjects in this study who were members of the Personal Interaction Group had predominantly successful experiences. (someone had to lose the checkers and bingo games). They changed visibly while they were making the tape recordings. At first they feared recording and giggled when listening to themselves. Then they decided to record "something". Many rerecordings were made of each program they developed. They never seemed to tire of doing it just "one" more time to make sure it was perfect. They listened to their finished products with pride showing on their faces. One group

actually exhibited fear when listening to its own recording of "Combat" with sound effects. Yet from this seemingly meaningless method of working with these subjects is it not interesting to see how much it appeared to affect the self concepts of those who had exhibited very low initial self concept scores?

Did these subjects with low self concepts not receive positive experiences in the average classroom? Were they unable to experience the freedom they felt in the Personal Interaction sessions? There must have been some kind of threatening feelings to have their self concept scores decrease when they remained in the classroom. Those subjects with the high self concepts did not seem to be affected in the same manner in the experimental situation. They seemed to be affected negatively by being taken out of the classroom. Who knows what operated here? They may have become insecure just wondering why they were selected for the experiment. The classroom teacher may want to look more closely at those children who have the need for developing better self concepts and consider just how he may best help to foster this growth. He may also want to consider those who have the high self concepts and identify that which helps to support it.

It is interesting to note that specialized reading instruction seemed to provide experiences which aided in increasing both reading efficiency ratios and the majority of self concept scores for the subjects included in this study. It would be nice if this were all we needed to do to aid the underachieving reader to succeed academically and attain some more positive elements of self esteem.

A replication of this study on a much larger scale, in several communities may give us some interesting insight into the affect which learning situations have upon students' self concepts and reading abilities. It would seem to be of value to do further research to investigate the impact which a specialized reading program and personal interaction activities may have upon the self concepts and reading abilities of a total school population.

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